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Hispanic Catholicism in New Spain and New Mexico

With Special Reference to Mora

by

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Introduction

In this paper I will attempt to outline the history of the Catholic Church in New Mexico from colonial times to the present. New Mexico's ecclesiastical evolution must always be seen within the larger context of the Spanish metropole and that of New Spain. With this in mind, a substantial introduction will provide the work's Iberian and Mexican background. The main body of my article, however, pertains to the Catholic history of New Mexico, which is covered by way of periodization. Finally, an overview of the church's development in Mora will be explored in order to establish local context. I am aware of no other work in print, since the pioneer studies of Dr. Frances Scholes that cover the same material, moving as this paper does from the macro-history of the Spanish imperial church to the Spanish history of a local community.

The central premise of this essay is that Roman Catholicism was characteristic of the Spanish-speaking world since the middle ages, and would remain so until the general secularization of Western societies in the nineteenth century. Life in Hispanic New Mexico was largely centered on the church, also.

The Catholic Heritage of Spain

The Roman Catholic religion has been the paladin of Spanish national identity since the end of the Middle Ages (Payne, 1984). In 1492 the Moorish city of Granada fell to the forces of the Catholic kings, Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabel of Castille. The fall of Granada marked the end of the *Reconquista* - Christian Spain's centuries old war to drive the Muslims out of the Iberian Peninsula. The *Reconquista* militarized Spanish society reinforcing its aristocratic ethos, especially the attitude that wealth should be gained by plunder or the forced labor of conquered non-Christians. Spanish Catholicism also manifested a unique combination of regalism and devotion to the papacy (Gongora, 1975). Such was typical of a frontier society where constant danger required the close supervision of the king as supreme commander. Moreover, Christian Spain always needed papal help to appeal for reinforcements from the rest of Christian Europe.

Spain's religious career in the Americas was an extension of the medieval church's military mission. When emperor Charles V (1516-1556) campaigned against the Ottoman Turks in the Mediterranean or sanctioned the deeds of the conquistadores in the New World, he was fulfilling the ancient ideology of *cruzada* or holy war (Weckman, 1992). The roots of this ideology date back to the Old Testament when Yahweh sanctioned the Hebrews' conquest of Canaan. When the Roman Emperor Constantine (306-337) became a Christian, he was encouraged by court bishops to use the imperium to defend the church and extend its sway. Later, Charlemagne (768-814) conquered the pagan Saxons and forcibly converted them to Catholic Christianity (Gongora, 1975).

During the thirteenth century Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) allowed the Teutonic order of knight-monks to transfer their field of operation from Palestine to the Baltic; here

they conquered and converted the pagan Baltic peoples, establishing the Teutonic Orden Stadt - ancestor of Imperial Prussia (Gongora, 1975). The military orders in Spain performed the same function. Had not the gospel said, in the parable of the rich man's banquet, "C*ompelle eos intrare*" (Force them to come in).

In 1492, the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabel, ordered the expulsion of all the Jews in Spain who would not convert to the Catholic faith; about half (some 200,000) the Jews in Spain left. Those who remained publicly professed Catholic Christianity. However, suspicion concerning the sincerity of their conversion led to the establishment of the Spanish inquisition which supervised the faith and morals of Spanish society, especially the religious behavior of the *conversos*. By these measures Ferdinand and Isabel achieved, a much sought after social goal -- the religious unification of their respective kingdoms (Lippy, 1992). On October 12, 1492 Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the Caribbean initiating the Spanish colonization of the Americas. For Columbus and his royal patrons Christianization of the New World was paramount.

During the early colonization of the Caribbean, prominent church officials such as Bartolome de las Casas raised their voices in protest against the cruel treatment of the Indians. Throughout the sixteenth century, a moral debate raged in Spain and the New World concerning the rights of the conquered. The Spanish court and church tried to ameliorate the condition of the Indians through humane legislation (Brading, 1991). Unfortunately most of those laws remained a dead letter, because the monarchy needed funds produced by forced labor, which precluded their implementation.

The Spanish monarchy acquired proprietary rights over the church far in excess to those of other Catholic states. The Popes, Alexander VI (1493), and Julius II (1508),

established papal concessions to Spain's monarchs known as the "p*atronato real.*" The kings of Spain thereby controlled all ecclesiastical appointments and the revenues of local churches. However, they in turn assumed the burden of supporting the church, promoting its missionary enterprise, and regulating the clergy. In essence, the "p*atronato real*" represented the perfect union of throne and altar - the mainstay of the Spanish monarchy (Shiels, 1961).

The Spanish monarchy saw itself as a new Roman Empire in the Americas, imposing order, building cities, modernizing societies, and Christianizing barbarians. The Roman poet, Virgil had said, "To rule nations with imperium these shall be thy arts, oh Romans; to humble the proud with war and to crown peace and justice to the weak." Moreover, Spain's American possessions were colonized in the older Roman sense of founding a society - in effect creating new Spains (Brading, 1991). Spaniards of the "*Siglo de Oro*" (1492-1648) were always proud to recall that it was a Roman emperor from Spain, Trajan (98-117), who extended Rome's boundaries to its greatest extent. Another Spanish emperor, Theodosius "the great" (379-395), had established the glorious alliance of throne and altar, proscribing all non-Christian religions within the Roman Empire.

One of the reasons why the Spanish church was able to assume the burden of christianizing the Americas was the early reformation of Spanish Catholicism. Cardinal Ximinez Cisneros was an active agent in reforming the Spanish church during the reign of the Catholic Kings (1479-1516). He restored discipline within the religious orders, appointed more dedicated clerics, and founded the University of Alcala where Renaissance humanism was taught. These and other reforms virtually made Spain immune to the temptations of the Protestant Reformation (Payne, 1984). During the sixteenth century, Spain's civilization would flourish as never before. Later generations would call this age the "*Siglo de Oro.*" During that glorious era, Spanish conquistadores, explorers, and missionaries would bestride the known world like colossi. Meanwhile in Europe, Catholic Spain was the greatest power sustained by the silver mines of Mexico and Peru.

The Catholic Church in New Spain

The conquest of Mexico was both military and religious. Hernan Cortez (1484-1547) was both the conqueror of the Mexica-Aztec Empire (1325-1521) and founder of the Catholic kingdom of New Spain (1521-1821). While Cortez established the political, socio-economic and cultural foundations of modern Mexico, he also advocated a revolutionary plan to evangelize Anahuac.

Cortez requested of his sovereign lord, Emperor Charles V (1516-1556), that only clergy from the reformed mendicant orders be sent to Mexico so that the new church there should not be exposed to the corruption of secular clergy. In 1524, Martín Valencia led a delegation of twelve observant Franciscans to Mexico; included in their ranks were such luminaries as Bernardo Sahagun, Motolinia, Andres de Olmos, and Pedro de Gante. Hernan Cortez met Martin Valencia and his apostles with great pomp and reverence,

humbling himself in penance before Valencia. All who observed this scene were duly impressed by the spiritual power of the friars and their moral authority, not the least, those Indians observing the spectacle (Ricard, 1966).

Soon other religious orders joined the Franciscans in Mexico, including the Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits. Women's religious orders also appeared in the cities. Together the religious orders evangelized Mexico, substituting Roman Catholicism for the persecuted belief system of the natives. They transformed Meso-American societies into Christian ones. To accomplish this task the missionaries believed it necessary to segregate their charges; and isolate them from the abuse of Spanish settlers. The "*Republica de los Indios*," however, was undermined from the beginning by the devastating impact of Old World diseases, feudal demands of the *encomienda* system, forced labor in the silver mines of New Spain's northern frontier, and by the general demoralization caused by the conquest. Nevertheless, early missionaries performed a great service by preserving as much of the native culture as they destroyed. Encyclopedic compilations of Meso-American culture were produced by Sahagun, Landa, Betanzos, Duran, and Juan de Torquemada; much of modern ethnology is built on their achievements (Ricard, 1966).

Many of the apostolic generation in New Spain were sympathetic to the teachings of the spiritual Franciscans, Erasmian humanism, and the prophecies of Joachime of Fiore. At first, the Mendicants believed that they were building a new church in a New World, free of the vices and sins of the old. Their conceptualization of the process of evangelization was utopian. In the Americas a Christian community would emerge similar of spirit to the first generation of Christians after the death of Jesus. The losses to heresy

in Europe caused by the Protestant Reformation would be more than compensated by the gains made for the Catholic religion in the New World (Phelan, 1970). Yet, the church was also an ideological prop of the Spanish monarchy preaching obedience to the government and acquiescence to its social order. The condominium that existed between church and state in the Spanish empire was reminiscent to that which existed in the Byzantine world, where the Church was governed by the ideology of Caesaro-Papism.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, central Mexico had been incorporated into Spain's world order and northward expansion began. The *"Drag nach Norden"* was the crucible of Mexico's *Norteño* culture of which New Mexico would soon be a part. Impelling Spain's interests northward into the wilds of the *Gran Chichimeca* were medieval notions of lost cities, fabulous kingdoms, continental passages, and exotic women. Initially, Cabeza de Vaca and Fray Marcos de Niza explored the region. Francisco Coronado reconnoitered *El Norte* between 1540 and 1542, and was disillusioned by the Pueblo cultures of the region. Moreover, the discovery of silver at Zacatecas (1546) consumed much of New Spain's social resources besides giving the Iberian metropolis the means to sustain its great power status (Powell, 1975).

In the tradition of the Reconquista (1085-1492), Spanish war bands formed throughout the frontiers of the Spanish empire under the leadership of elected or royally appointed captains called *Caudillos* or *Adelantados.* They made *entradas* into new land at their own cost, hoping to acquire *encomiendas*, discover mines, and conquer rich native civilizations (Brading, 1991). And why not dream such dreams? Had not Cortez and Pizzaro succeeded beyond their wildest imaginations? Silver strikes in northern Mexico also initiated the fifty year struggle known as the Chichimeca war (1544-1594). Until that

conflict was resolved any forced occupation of areas north of the Rio Grande was unsustainable. During the Chichimeca war, northern New Spain reproduced the Iberian milieu of the "*Reconquista,*" replete with that great struggle's military ethos, cattle-ranching economy, and hegemonic patrimonialism. From medieval Spain came *El Norte's* four basic frontier institutions - the *presidio*, the *mission*, the *villa*, and the *rancho*. The presidio established political jurisdiction, while the mission provided the sanction of religion. The villa represented the pacification of the frontier by way of town building. Finally, the rancho indicated a social milieu sufficiently developed to allow for dispersed settlement (Blackmar, 1976).

On the lands that later became the American Southwest, these four basic institutions were the main vehicles of socialization and Hispanicization. If wealth had been extracted from New Mexico, Texas, and California, and had they been more populous, they would have eventually added a bishopric and a college to their institutional base, as did Chihuahua and Sonora, thereby providing themselves with the means of producing a self-perpetuating cadre of clergy and secular professionals. This would have made future Americanization less secure and eventually reversible. A comparison with Quebec is particularly poignant in so far as that French-speaking province did posses a local clergy and intelligentsia capable of resisting their British conquerors, and at the end of the 20th century even aspired for political independence. Ironically, one of New Mexico's most capable sons, Padre Antonio José Martínez, sought to create an infrastructure of Spanish-language secondary schools that would have trained a Spanish-speaking New Mexican intelligentsia (Chávez, 1981).

Indicative of the successful synthesis of Spanish Catholicism and American custom was the emergence of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe. According to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to the Indian Juan Diego in December 1531, requesting a shrine be built in her honor. Juan Diego was unable to convince anyone of the validity of his vision until the Virgin's image was miraculously imprinted on his mantle, where he was carrying some roses that the Virgin had made bloom in winter. At first, the mendicants opposed the apparition because the site was located on the hill of *Tepeyac,* an ancient place of worship of the earth goddess, *Tonantzin.* However, the image grew in popularity, seemingly a sign of divine grace shed on Mexico. The image of the Virgin was that of a young, pregnant, Mexican princess which endeared the cult to New Spain's population. In 1648, the Creole priest Miguel Sánchez wrote a definitive account of the apparition which set off a torrent of imitators, each trying to surpass the rest in evocation of the miracle (Poole, 1995). Guadalupe, which derives its name in part from the famous *Conquistadora* in Extremadura, became the symbol of creole patriotism, proving that Mexico had a part in God's providential plan - *Non fecit talitier omnia nationi* (Other nations are not thus blessed).

In Europe, Spain became the supreme champion of the Counter-Reformation (1542-1648). Under the Hapsburg dynasty (1516-1700), Spain defined its chief objective as the defense and expansion of a militant Catholicism. The reign of Philip II (1556-1598) represented the nearly total symbiosis of Catholic Orthodoxy and Castilian nationalism (Po-Chia Hsia, 1998). Philip's resources were inflated by the silver fleets that brought the treasures of Mexico and Peru to Spain. The treasures of the Indies were used against the Ottoman Turks in the Mediterranean, to curtail the spread of Protestantism in northern

Europe, and to spread Catholicism in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Spain's wealth and eventually her great power status were expended in these efforts.

The Counter-Reformation was a response to the disastrous consequences of the Protestant Reformation (1517-1555). The papacy took the lead in restoring the fortunes of the battered Catholic church. New religious orders were formed and many saints appeared (Wright, 1982). Among these, the most outstanding was that of the society of Jesus (Jesuits) founded by a Spanish hidalgo, Ignatius Loyola. The Jesuits soon became the elite shock troops of restored Catholicism, serving as missionaries, educators, and papal agents throughout the world - from the courts of Catholic Europe to those of Manchu China and Moghul India. They also missionized the extremities of the continents in Paraguay, Sonora, the Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Congo (Bangert, 1986). The spirit of the conquistadores was duplicated in these missionary enterprises.

The Council of Trent, which met irregularly for twenty years (1542-1564), established a template for modern Catholicism that would not be superseded until the Second Vatican Council in the middle of the twentieth century (1962-1965). Trent reasserted the full panoply of Catholic doctrine - seven sacraments, mariology, justification by faith and good works, supremacy of scriptures and tradition, priestly authority, apostolic succession, transubstantiation, the existence of purgatory, monasticism, prayer to saints, and the petrince doctrine. Trent also emphasized the authority of bishops over all clergy in their dioceses and ordered the founding of seminaries to train priests (Poole, 1987). Medieval scholasticism was revived by the council, partially as a result of its vigor in Spanish academic and religious circles. Two of the period's greatest scholastics were Spaniards: Francisco Vitoria, O.P. and Francisco Suárez, S.J. Furthermore, it should be

recalled that scholasticism upheld the right of native sons to hold the offices of church, state, and economy in their land of birth (Gongora, 1975). This particularly revolutionary doctrine would lead to the later expulsion of the Jesuits (1767) from the Spanish empire.

The Founding of New Mexico

In the summer of 1598, the *Adelantado* Juan de Oñate founded the *Reino de San Francisco de Nuevo Mexico.* Juan's father, Cristóbal, founded Zacatecas in 1546, becoming one of the richest men in New Spain. His son dreamed of surpassing his father's deeds and finding in the north another Mexico - a New Mexico - like the one that Cortez conquered. One should also recall that Juan de Oñate was married to a granddaughter of Moctezuma II, the last Mexica-Aztec emperor (Simmons, 1991). Oñate shouldered most of the expense of the expedition, which was delayed for several years while the inquisition checked its members for any taint of crypto-Judaism, especially after the scandal that brought down the Caravajal family in Nuevo León (1592). Accompanying Oñate was a contingent of Franciscans who were to supervise the spiritual well-being of the colony. Unfortunately, the missionaries that came to New Mexico were of the third generation of mendicants whose earlier enthusiasm and commitment to evangelization, empathy for native cultures, and knowledge of indigenous languages had waned. The result was a mission that emphasized Hispanicization as well as Chrisitianization (Dussel, 1983). Gone were the utopian dreams of an American church living in apostolic purity.

New Mexico was settled under the new directives initiated by Phillip II in 1573 to insure a peaceful occupation with minimum resort to coercion or military force (Weber, 1992). The pacification and occupation of the Philippines (1567-1578) was the first

application of these new directives. New Mexico, like the Philippines, was quickly occupied after a concentrated show of force; a capital city was chosen for its strategic site (respectively Manila and Santa Fé), the natives were apportioned into *encomiendas* in order to exploit their labor, finally missionaries of the religious orders were used to facilitate Hispanicization.

Periods of the Catholic Church in New Mexico

New Mexican history, thereafter, capitulated the main currents of Latin American social evolution. Poverty and low population density in New Mexico precluded the evolution of a truly separate identity for New Mexico within the overall development of New Spain/ Mexico.

Period One.

New Mexico and other areas of the later American Southwest were "discovered" and explored by Cabeza de Vaca and Francisco Vásquez de Coronado (1529-1542). As long as the Chichimeca war raged in *El Norte*, and Indian labor was available and abundant in central Mexico there was no incentive to conquer and occupy New Mexico.

Period Two.

However, once great epidemics swept away millions in central Mexico in the middle sixteenth century, the prospect of subduing New Mexico's numerous pueblo populations seemed inviting; cosequently, New Mexico's conquest and settlement occurred between 1545 and 1632. The indigenous were quickly assigned to forty *encomenderos* and further apportioned between a score of missions and chapels. Once the fledgling kingdom found a permanent capital (Santa Fé) in 1609, the region was put on a modest economic footing mainly through the sale of slaves captured from the Apaches.

Sending slaves to the mines of northern Mexico exacerbated hostility felt by Indians toward the Hispanic settlers. Furthermore, the situation worsened due to the severe persecution of the Pueblo religion and holy men or shamans (Hallenbeck, 1950).

Period Three.

The Pueblo Revolt (1680-1692) was, in part, a social revolution directed against the 2,500 Hispanic settlers in New Mexico. Led by the shaman Popé, the Indians succeeded in driving out the Hispanos. The first New Mexico (1598-1680) was also undermined by the constant struggle between the clergy and the civil authorities to control native labor (Salpointe, 1967). New Mexico's governor often complained that the religious were ruthlessly persecuting and exploiting the Pueblos which intensified their resistance. The clergy, in turn, complained to the viceroy about the abuses of the *encomienda* and the *repartimiento*. Moreover, the struggle between church and state was characteristic of the whole Spanish empire under the Habsburg dynasty (1516-1700). In the New World, there was also a contest between Creoles and Peninsulars over appointments to church and government offices. A system called the *"alternativa"* was devised whereby Creoles and Peninsulars alternated in the highest offices of church and state. Since the Creoles far outnumbered the Peninsulars in the seventeenth century they still felt aggrieved by the arrangement. During the Pueblo revolt, most of the missionary priests of New Mexico were martyred in their parishes and missions.

Period Four.

The Reconquest (1692-1704) of New Mexico was led by Don Diego de Vargas and was initially bloodless because the pueblos were anxious to regain Spain's military umbrella. De Vargas worked out a "*modus vivendi*" with the pueblos which allowed him

to reoccupy the province quickly. The governor later attributed his success to the intervention of New Mexico's own *Conquistador* (Weber, 1992).

Period Five.

The De Vargas settlement put New Mexico on a sound social foundation by conceding religious toleration to the Pueblos and abolishing the encomienda in favor of paid labor; the pueblos were also armed and used as military allies against other nomadic tribes. The plains Indians were more threatening at this time because of the spread of the horse, which increased their military potential *vis a vis* the Europeans. These social arrangements would prevail until the mid-nineteenth century (Weber, 1992).

The Spanish Monarchy under the new French house of Bourbon (1700-1821) placed more emphasis on soldiers and efficient Peninsulars than on religion. Moreover, Spanish, French, and Italian Bourbons forced the Pope to abolish the society of Jesus (1767) in their respective domains. This act single-handedly undermined Creole attachment to Spain because the Jesuits had been champions of Creole patriotism (Bangert, 1986). The eighteenth century, in general, saw a renewal of Spanish expansion along Mexico's northern frontier; as exemplified in the Reconquest of New Mexico (1692), the settlement of Texas (1718), the *entrada* into Nuevo Santander (1749), and the occupation of Alta California (1769) (Jones, 1979). This renewed energy was partially a response to foreign threats - French, English, and Russian. The revived vigor of the empire can also be attributed to participation of the Creoles and creolized *Mestizos* who now saw their local homelands threatened, and dreamed of emulating their conquistador ancestors by making new conquests in *El Norte*. The Bourbon church in the New World was also renewed by the entry of enthusiastic Creoles into its ranks, who were inspired by

the spread of *Guadalupanismo* and were now being trained at *propaganda fide* colleges as missionaries in Zacatecas and Querétaro (Gongora, 1975).

Period Six.

The Comanches and Apaches practically overran New Mexico in the middle eighteenth century. French and later American interlopers also caused much consternation in Bourbon New Mexico (1700-1821). The Bourbon reforms were implemented in New Mexico once the new commandancy-general in Chihuahua was created in 1776. Governor Juan Batista de Anza (1777-1788), whose family had served on the northern frontier since the Chichimeca war, saved the kingdom of New Mexico from being abandoned as recommended by the Marquis de Rubí in the 1760's. De Anza stabilized the military situation by defeating the Comanches, Apaches, Navajos, and Utes in a series of lightning campaigns (Weber, 1992). He subsequently forced them to make peace with New Mexico which held until the Mexican period, when hostilities resumed as a result of Governor Manuel Armijo's grants of Indian hunting grounds to Mexican communities and Anglo-American interlopers. Governor de Anza increased the security of New Mexico by situating villages around fortified plazas, ordering the construction of *torreons*, and establishing *Genizaro*[*] settlements in areas outside of the Rio Grande Valley. *Genizaro* villages, in effect, acted as a first line of defense. Moreover, De Anza encouraged economic development by fostering the Taos trading fairs and pioneering direct routes to Chihuahua and Sonora, thus creating a larger *Norteño* economic zone. During De Anza's administration *merino* or *churro* sheep were also introduced into New Mexico, finally

[*] Genizaros were hispanicized Indians raised as servants in Nuevo Mexicano housholds.

giving the impoverished kingdom a viable economic base, which eventually led to the emergence of a small *rico* class in the Rio Abajo region (Ellis, 1971).

In late Bourbon New Mexico (1776-1810), the population slowly expanded as Hispanic settlers came to outnumber the still declining Pueblo population. Meanwhile, the eighteen to twenty three Franciscan priests that served New Mexico were proving to be too few to minister to the kingdom's spiritual needs. Repeatedly, the religious begged for episcopal visitations from Durango, or for the establishment of a seminary and diocese in New Mexico so that a self-sufficient church could emerge (Salpointe, 1967). Unfortunately, New Mexico's poverty precluded the possibility of supporting a full-scale ecclesiastical establishment, and the trend in Bourbon Mexico was for bishoprics to be established only after the local church had moved away from *docrinas* staffed by priests of the religious orders to parishes supported by local tithes and manned by diocesan or secular clergy recruited in province. None of which would occur until after the American conquest (1846-1853); at which time a French bishop serving as a missionary in Ohio was sent to New Mexico to set up a diocese and sever all ties to Mexico's ecclesiastical culture (Horgan, 1975). The effects of this change of religious jurisdiction was devastating to any prospect of New Mexico maintaining a separate regional identity such as evolved in Quebec.

Throughout the period of the Bourbon reforms (1760-1810), the Creole church in Mexico felt increasingly alienated from the Frenchified regime in Madrid which seemed determined to reimpose its control over the New World, purging local governments and churches of native sons who had asserted their natural right to govern their own state and ecclesiastical institutions during the previous period of imperial uncertainty (1640-1760).

Bourbon King, Charles III (1759-1788), seemed determined not only to rehabilitate the economy but also to reconquer the government and church in the Americas. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 was part of this process as was the inspection of the *visitador-general* José de Galvez in New Spain (Brading, 1991). By 1801, Spain - desperately involved with the French Revolution and Napoleon in Europe - was considering nationalizing all church lands in order to raise funds to deal with its European crisis. The American church protested violently which caused the monarchy to delay the order's implementation. But, a real breach had opened between the church and state which would continue to poison the later relations of the independent Spanish American republics with the church; for those regimes saw themselves as the heirs of the fallen monarchy's *patronato real* and its secularizing policies. Interestingly, Spanish jurists since the seventeenth century had already concluded that should the monarchy loose its religious claim to missionize and protect the church in the New World then its own self-defined legitimacy would be forfeit (Brading, 1991). With good reason then did later Mexican conservatives such as Lucas Alaman conclude that Mexico would loose its cohesive corporate identity should it disestablish the church and thereby alienate the only institutional prop that all Mexicans shared, separated as they were by language, caste and region.

Period Seven.

Mexican Independence (1810-1821) was initially led and inspired by disaffected Mexican priests (the Creole Miguel Hidalgo and the Mulatto, Jose Morelos). However, the vast hordes of C*astas* and *Indios* that rallied to their cause frightened the *Criollo* ruling class into wary submission to the king. The church was also divided along social

and racial lines with much of the higher clergy, who were *Peninsulares* and high-born *Criollos*, supporting the royal government; while the Hidalgo and Morelos revolutions were primarily supported by lower clergymen who were *Criollo* commoners, *Mestizos, Castas*, and *Indio* (Lippy, 1992). Most of these events hardly touched New Mexico even though Hidalgo was executed in Chihuahua, and everyone noticed a general loosening of royal authority. New Mexico interestingly sent one delegate, Jose Pino, to the Cortes (parliament) in Spain during the time of Napoleon's occupation of the Iberian peninsula. Interestingly, that delegate advocated the prompt establishment of a diocese and a university in New Mexico (Chávez, 1981).

The crisis engendered by Napoleon's invasion temporarily fostered a mood of pan-Hispanic solidarity; the government in exile at Cadiz adopted the liberal constitution of 1812 that allowed the American provinces some representation in Sápain's Cortes. Unfortunately, when Napoleon was defeated in 1814, the deposed Spanish crown prince resumed the restored Bourbon throne of Spain as Ferdinand VII (1814-1833). The king had no thought but to restore the absolutism of the Old Regime and disregard the liberal provisions of the constitution of 1812. Ferdinand dispatched Spanish troops to restore royal authority throughout the New World. Most of the ruling classes were appalled by the king's heavy-handedness but were generally even more afraid of a social revolution, such as occurred in Haiti (1797-1806) degenerating into an all out race war, so they continued to support the dynasty (Brading, 1991). The Bourbons, moreover, had changed the relationship between the empire and the metropolis; whereas the Hapsburgs (1516-1700) had conceived the Catholic World Monarchy as a confederation of Spanish kingdoms, much like medieval Spain, united by dynasty and religion (Weckman, 1992),

the Bourbons, viewed the overseas empire as a collection of provinces bound to a French-style central government in Spain. When the Spanish army revolted in 1820 and forced Ferdinand VII to restore the constitution of 1812, the ruling classes of Mexico, tired of Spanish inconstancy, promptly declared Mexico an independent empire (1821) later a federal republic (1824). New Mexico became a department under Mexican jurisdiction.

Period Eight.

New Mexico, a province of the short-lived Mexican empire (1821-1823) and then as a department of the Mexican republic (1824-1846), remained a land of poverty where the refinements of Mexico's Creole civilization were hardly visible. New Mexico's failure to develop a full-fledged independent Hispanic society can largely be attributed to the incompleteness of its cultural self-identity, otherwise there should have been no barrier to a sub-nationalism on the scale of Central America developing out of New Mexico's variant of Creole patriotism. One should also recall that Mexico's own national identity was slow in emerging from New Spain's complex social milieu, perhaps not fully forming until the Mexican Revolution (1910-1929). Though New Mexico was as old as most Latin American societies, its poverty, military insecurity, and small population largely determined its fate. The vast institutional network of central Mexico with its landed nobility, standing army, civil bureaucracy, merchant guilds, and its great Creole church, replete with Baroque cathedrals, universities, seminaries, libraries, convents, hospitals, and myriad ranks of clergy was unknown in *El Norte*.

The Creole elite of New Mexico did achieve the most cherished goal of that class the governance of its own state apparatus and local church. Local *ricos* governed New Mexico throughout most of the quarter century of Mexican rule; though, there was a short

period of direct rule from Mexico City (1835-1837) which led to a rebellion of the lower classes. The rebellion of 1837 was part of a larger movement against the centralist regime in Mexico City, resulting in Texas independence and widespread provincial autonomy throughout *El Norte*. The rebellion of 1837 was put down by Manuel Armijo using armed retainers from his own estates and those of other *rico* families in the Rio Abajo. Governor Armijo held on to the government of New Mexico for the better part of nine years, his ascendancy marking the rise of Rio Abajo *hacendados* over the *rancheros* and farmers of Rio Arriba (Ellis, 1971).

Throughout the Mexican period New Mexico was threatened by Anglo-American infiltration, much of which was the result of the burgeoning Santa Fé Trail trade (fostered by Mexico's declaration of free trade in 1823). The resulting capitalization of New Mexico's economy benefited the small *rico* class and their American contacts, but in turn reduced New Mexico to a neo-colonial status dependent on the United States. Moreover, the value of the trade also repeatedly exposed New Mexico to Texan invasion (1841,1843), and passage across the plains antagonized the nomadic tribes who felt their old treaty with New Mexico was now being suspended. Padre Martínez of Taos warned the Mexican and later the American governments about this situation (Chávez, 1981).

The Age of Padre Martínez 1820-1850

Padre Antonio José Martínez (1793-1867) was the most remarkable New Mexican of the nineteenth century. A native of Abiqui, an old *Genizaro* community, he married and had a child. After his wife died he went to Durango, Mexico to receive holy orders, at the time of Mexican independence (1817-1822). His later political activism was fostered by the influence and memory of the curates Miguel Hidalgo and José Morelos. In effect,

Padre Martínez was a product of what is called the Catholic Enlightenment - a movement initiated in Catholic Europe but also strong in Spanish America which sought to reconcile the eternal truths of the Catholic church with the new scientific world view of the *philosophes*. Among the Catholic Enlightenment's, most brilliant exponents was the Mexican Jesuit Francisco Xavier Clavigero (1731-1787) whose ***Historia Antiguo de México,*** redeemed New Spain's Indian past and elevated the Mexica - Aztecs to the role of imperial founders of the Mexican nation (Brading, 1991). Padre Martínez's brilliant and creative genius cannot be explained by the isolated provinciality of New Mexico; it must be attributed to Mexico's dynamic Catholic civilization. Padre Martínez was named curate of Taos in 1827. His appointment being part of a long term policy of the secular or diocesan church to comply with the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (1542-1564), which had mandated the transfer of local *doctrinas* from the religious orders to the parish structure of a secular diocese with native-born sons presiding as priests.

The independence of Mexico led to a crisis in the government of the Catholic Church. After the break with Spain, the Pope in Rome refused to accept Mexican independence and appoint prelates to replace those members of the hierarchy who died or fled to Spain in 1821. Moreover, the young Mexican republic was still fearful of a Spanish Reconquest (as attempted in 1829) and decided to expel all Peninsulars not married to Mexicans. Along these same lines, the national government secularized all the missions in *El Norte* in the 1830's. The diocesan clergy that were suppose to take the place of the religious orders proved insufficient for the task. Many Native-Americans abandoned the missions in California, Sonora, Texas, and the Yucatan. In New Mexico only a dozen secular priests replaced the twenty five friars that ministered to the provinces 36,000

Hispanos and 8,000 *Indios*. The spread of penitential practices, devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the proliferation of the third order of St. Francis were engendered by the crisis attendant upon the withdrawal of the Franciscans (Weigle, 1976). Fathers such as Martínez in Taos and José Gallegos in Alburquerque tried to foster the new practices and devotions and keep them under clerical supervision. New Mexico's local *santero* arts flourished as never before as the community fostered its own resources and talents. Later, during the Bishop of Durango's visitations (1833, 1845), disparaging remarks were recorded concerning the prelate's contempt for local *santos*.

Padre Martínez introduced the first printing press into New Mexico, and a short-lived newspaper, ***El Crepúsculo.*** At the same time, Martinez actively sought the appointment of a Bishop for New Mexico. One can only speculate as to the outcome of events had Padre Martínez been named the Bishop of Santa Fé instead of Lamy. The curate of Taos was active in promoting the creation of a secondary school system in his parish which he hoped would be a stepping stone to the eventual establishment of a full-fledged college and seminary. The fifty or so students who passed through Martínez's school in Taos would be drawn from many parts of New Mexico. At least twenty of New Mexico's prominent Hispano politicians and public figures spent some time with the curate of Taos as did twelve of the area's future priests (Chávez, 1981). Imagine the possibilities had Padre Martínez had the active support of the Mexican government and church. Naturally, it did not suit the interests of the Americans to foster this local patriot, even though he served as a representative in the territorial legislature. His equally active colleague, Padre Gallegos of Alburquerque, later served as New Mexico's territorial representative in the American Congress.

The American subjugation of New Mexico was a slow and difficult process. It took almost a century for Anglo-Americans to break and suppress the penchant New Mexico's native sons had for politics and public life. Once the Spanish monarchy's authoritarian institutions lapsed, the old Mediterranean propensities for a precocious public life came to the fore among New Mexico's Hispanos. One should recall that democracy and republican institutions originated in Greece and Rome - the ancient Mediterranean ancestors of Spain, and by extension Spain's New World progeny (Gongora, 1975).

New Mexico could not forestall its inevitable confrontation with the United States westward expansion - justified as "Manifest Destiny." The confrontation between the United States and Mexico over control of *El Norte* - later the American Southwest - was also a struggle between rival forms of European or Europeanized civilization. The United States, as a former colony of England, was in effect, the representative of a North American variant of Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. Mexico, on the other hand, was not only the heartland of an older Meso-American civilization, but was the child of Catholic Spain, therefore Latin and Mediterranean in culture. The old struggle between Phillip II of Spain (1556-1598) and Elizabeth I of England (1559-1603) manifested itself in the descendants of their New World empires (Blackmar, 1976). Even today, the northward march of *Mexicanos* and the westward drive of Anglo-Americans leaves the fate of the old Spanish borderlands undecided.

The Evolution of the Catholic Church in Mora

The Mexican Period (1821-1848).

The Mexican period witnessed a quarter of a century of upheaval and disturbance, punctuated by local uprisings (1837), renewed Indian raids, Texan incursions (1841, 1843), changes in government, economic capitalization, and finally conquest by the United States (1846-1848). It was also a time when the local elites of New Mexico enjoyed a high degree of self-government, and experienced republican institutions. Furthermore, the boundaries of New Mexico were pushed northwestward up the Chama river, north from the Taos valley, and northeastward into Mora and Las Vegas. The church had already established a presence on the east side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the mission at Pecos pueblo, and at San Miguel del Vado, a *Genizaro* community. The fledgling settlements in the region were served by clergymen who crossed the mountains from Picuris, Taos, and Santa Cruz. The chapels of San Antonio, San Isidro, and San Gertrudes were the center of religious life in Mora Valley. No permanent priest resided there until after 1850 (Stanley, 1963).

Mora and Las Vegas were largely established to act as buffers against Anglo-American interlopers who were drifting into the region by way of the Santa Fé Trail. Some Americans and French Canadians settled in Mora and eventually married into the community; most also became Catholics (Stanley, 1963). Yet, one should always recall that these outsiders did not really identify with New Mexican and Creole patriotism; they should be viewed as active agents of an American takeover - especially, Charles Bent, Kit Carson, and Cerain St. Vrain.

Mora had repelled and survived two Texan attacks, but was unable to forestall the American conquest in 1846. Once General Stephen Kearney and most of his troops left Santa Fe to conquer California, Hispanos, *Genizaros*, and Pueblo Indians throughout

northern New Mexico attempted to overthrow American rule (Ellis, 1971). At the time, the war in Mexico was still raging, General Santa Ana was engaged in a life and death struggle with General Scott in the central region of the republic. Technically the New Mexicans were not rebelling but rather legitimately resisting a foreign occupation. Manuel Cortez, leader of the Taos rebellion, was the nemesis of the Americans, charismatically fueling the fires of resistance and harassing American forces and local Hispano collaborators. His heroic guerrilla war would continue until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848. Meanwhile, superior American forces defeated the *Nuevo Mexicano* patriots at Embudo, Taos Pueblo, and Mora, which was destroyed during the fighting. With these acts, the honor of Nuevo Mexico was redeemed after the humiliating flight of Governor Armijo from Apache Canyon at the start of the war.

The Territorial Era (1848-1912)

The church played an ambiguous role during the resistance to American conquest. Priests like Padre Martínez had tried to calm down the situation, sheltering some of the detested Americans (Chávez, 1981). Perhaps the clergy feared greater reprisals from the Americans, or maybe they were acting on the natural reluctance of the church to foster rebellion to dully constituted authority. In Europe, the Papacy was experiencing a phase of extreme reaction to the excesses of the French revolution and Napoleonic imperialism. Ironically, the Papacy discouraged the Catholic nationalist uprisings of the Irish against Protestant England, the Belgians against Protestant Holland, and the Poles against orthodox Russia. Therefore, it was no surprise when Pius IX (1845-1879) appointed a reactionary French missionary working in the American Mid-west to be the first bishop, later Archbishop, of Santa Fé in 1850 (Horgan, 1975).

Hispanic clergy in New Mexico were understaffed, demoralized by military defeat, and were slowly losing control of religious life of New Mexicans, many were turning to private devotions and the *penitente* brotherhood for spiritual solace (Wiegle, 1976). Hispano clergymen were well aware of the fact that the American conquest represented a threat to the Catholic culture of Nuevo Mexicanos. This was the era of the "Know-Nothings," and anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment among America's Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority. During the age of Manifest Destiny (1803-1867) Native-Americans and Mexicanos were despised as inferior races impeding Nordic expansion and progress. Jean Lamy came to maintain Catholicism in New Mexico but not to preserve its Hispanic heritage; he was an active agent of Americanization.

Bishop Lamy used Hispanos' most beloved institution to accelerate their assimilation. Moreover, no help could be expected from Mexico where the War of the Reform (1855-1860) pitted Conservative against Liberals and led to the dis-establishment of the church and the wanton destruction of much of Mexico's Spanish Catholic culture (Bailey, 1974). Hostility toward the church would continue in Mexico through the Porfirato (1876-1910) and the Revolution (1910-1929), because of the church's identification with the conservative cause, its support of the French intervention (1861-1867), its *modus vivendi* with the Diaz regime, its opposition to the constitution of 1917, and its complicity in the Cristero war (1926-1929) (Bailey, 1974). Mexico's church should have been a reservoir of religious inspiration for New Mexico, like it was in colonial times and during the Independence movement. Ironically, near Las Vegas, New Mexico at Moctezuma, a seminary was later established, in response to the persecution of

the church in Mexico, where Mexican priests were trained from the 1930's until the 1960's.

Bishop Lamy rapidly asserted his control over the local church. First, he imported French priests and religious to New Mexico. Secondly, he excommunicated many prominent Hispano priests, including Padres Martinez and Gallegos (Horgan, 1975). Later, the bishop extended his excommunications to include members of the *Penitente* brotherhood. Throughout, this period (1850-1912) New Mexico's prelates were Frenchmen whose contempt for local Hispanics was manifest in purging the local church of native-born priests and rebuilding of parishes along franco-phile lines. This included the destruction and removal of traditional *bultos*, *retablos*, and *santos,* and their replacement with imported European religious objects.

This period of French domination was not without benefit for the church in New Mexico; a full-scale diocese evolved replete with a cathedral, secular and religious clergy, a seminary, Catholic schools, hospitals, convents, colleges, a press, and periodicals. Lamy's vast institutional superstructure may have institutional religious life in New Mexico, but it was not the vehicle of an Hispanic Catholic culture, instead the Archdiocese of Santa Fe was another instrument of Americanization. The situation in New Mexico was strikingly different from that in Quebec where the church was the means by which the region maintained its subnational identity.

Lamy sent Reverend Stephan Avel to serve as Mora's first curate; he was the third priest to respond to the bishop's call for clergy from France. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, France and Ireland were areas of revived Catholic ardor and were in essence missionary factories sending priests and religious throughout the world,

which compares with the role Iberians had played in the missionary enterprises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or that Mexican Creoles played in New Spain in the eighteenth. Avel was apparently critical of the *Penitentes*, and they allegedly poisoned him using sacramental wine (Stanley, 1963). This story indicates the growing alienation of Lamy's official church from Hispanic *Penitente* brothers; that brotherhood had in effect, become a means by which Hispanos manifested their religious and social opposition to American domination. Later during the times of *las Gorras Blancas* (1880-1892), Penitente *moradas* became refuges and meeting centers for the night riders in their campaign to turn back Anglo encroachment on Hispano land grants and private properties (Weigle, 1976).

Reverend Avel was succeeded by Padre Damrazo Talarid who is infamous for later replacing Padre Martínez in Taos. Interestingly, Padre Talarid was one of the few Spaniards to respond to Lamy's call for outside priests. Mora's most famous curate was Reverend J.B. Salpointe, later bishop of Tucson and Archbishop of Santa Fé. Salpointe established the ecclesiastical infrastructure of Lamy's new church in Mora, which survived until the middle of the twentieth century (Salpointe, 1967). For a few decades in the mid-nineteenth century Mora's parish was one of the largest in the Archdiocese of Santa Fé, stretching two hundred miles north to south, from the Mora Valley to Pueblo, Colorado. Furthermore, a vast arc of dependent chapels extended into the eastern plains, including Watrous, Sapello, Rainsville, Ocate, Guadalupita, Roy, Moscero, Wagon-Mound, Springer and Maxwell. Priests from Mora rode this circuit visiting the sites on the feast days of individual communities. This explains the irregularity of sacramental life and the failure of catechesis in northeastern New Mexico. Rural isolation also protected local

customs and traditions and explains the continued vitality of archaic Hispanic devotions, music, and folklore. Village and community life often went on with little reference to the new American regime and its collaborating Catholic clergy. Yet, market forces, political events (such as the Confederate invasion of 1862), Indian wars, the coming of the railroad, cadres of non-Hispanic capitalists, Anglo cattle ranching, and national elections ameliorated New Mexico's frontier status (Ellis, 1971). Viewed from Mexico City, Nuevo Mexico was an impoverished, distant, and marginal kingdom in "*El Norte*." Viewed from the perspective of Washington D.C., the territory of New Mexico appeared to be foreign, arid, violent, and an unprofitable part of the United States' southwestern borderlands (Meyer, 1996).

In 1865, Reverend Salpointe founded St. Mary's College for boys in 1865 run by the Brothers of Christian schools, which became a boarding school in 1871. Most of the religious were French and viewed the region as a foreign mission field. After nineteen years the college closed for lack of funds. The transfer of Salpointe to Arizona also contributed to the college's closure. In 1864, the Sisters of Loretto established a girls school in Mora, which remained open until 1967 though it burned down several times (1888, 1942, 1946). Interestingly as late as 1903 money from the territorial legislature was being appropriated to support Catholic schooling in Mora (Stanley, 1963). The issue of separation of church and state was apparently not as significant as the issue of available education in New Mexico. Moreover, Hispano political elites seemed oblivious to the American ideal of Separation of Church and State. Small cadres of local Catholics received rudimentary skills in these frontier schools, eventually a few Hispano clergy re-emerged after the purges of Lamy. Intellectuals Benjamin Read and Fray Angelico

Chávez attempted an intellectual accommodation out of the crisis engendered by their ambivalent status as American citizens and Catholic sons of an anglicized church (Melendez, 1997).

The first threat to Hispano identity in northeastern New Mexico came from the proliferation of Protestant sects in the late nineteenth century. Protestantism is the dominant form of Christianity in the United States, even today 70% of all Anglo-Americans define themselves as Protestants. Many *Nuevo Mexicanos* felt the draw of Protestant sects throughout the later nineteenth century because religious orientation shifts in the direction of political and economic opportunity. Protestant sects (Presbyterian and Methodist in 1870-1980; Baptist and Pentecostal in 1955-1998) offered the prospect of full-fledged Americanization. Moreover, Protestant schools such as McCurdy, Menaul, and Lea Patterson were vehicles for greater socio-economic assimilation. Many Hispanos were alienated from the official Catholic church because of Lamy's fatal campaign against *Nuevo Mexicano* priests, such as Martínez and Gallegos (Walker, 1991).

Part of Protestantism's attraction was based on the same components that facilitated its spread during the Reformation (1517-1555): First, the democratic orientation of Protestantism was self-evident since it offered salvation by faith alone without the intervention of a sacramental priesthood. In effect, Protestantism empowered the individual. Second, biblical supremacy in Protestant doctrine encouraged literacy which had utility in the secular aspects of a believer's life. Third, patriarchy was reinforced in the Protestant nuclear family with the father acting as priest and pastor (an aspect of Protestantism that may have attracted Hispano heads of household in New Mexico). Fourth, Protestantism's receptivity to capitalism seeking as it does the signs of election in

worldly success, serves as a boon to those who genuinely sought integration into America's capitalistic system. These same factors seem to be at work in contemporary Latin America as it makes the transition from an *Ancien Regime* (1494-1989) tied to an oligarchy of landowners, military officers, politicians, financiers and prelates to a modern society informed by middle class and mercantile values (Martin, 1990).

The Society of Jesus in New Mexico took the lead in combating the threat of imminent Protestantization. Jesuit secondary schools in Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and El Paso were in the forefront, as in the times of the Counter-Reformation (1542-1648), of training Catholic cadres capable of competing socially and inter-culturally with Protestant Anglos and not loose their Catholic identity (Bangert, 1986). St. Mary's Jesuit High School in Albuquerque educated generations of New Mexico's public figures, such as Judge John Brennan, Senator Pete Domenici, Judge Joseph Francini, Senate Pro Tem Manny Aragón, and Judge Ben Chávez. The Jesuits in Las Vegas later moved to Denver where they founded Regis University (Walker, 1991). Unfortunately, New Mexico's chronic poverty militated against maintaining a full-scale educational system in New Mexico, especially after 1890 when secular schools, colleges and universities (such as University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, Western New Mexico University, and New Mexico Highlands University) received public funds thereby becoming major instruments of professional socialization. Hispanos, were of course, largely excluded from these schools with the partial exception of New Mexico Highlands University (1893-), highlighting their colonialist objectives and attitudes - giving New Mexico's Anglo ruling class further advantages.

In 1867 the Jesuit priests Donato Gaspari and Rafael Bianchi, both Neapolitans, arrived to found the Society of Jesus in New Mexico. The Jesuits published ***La Revista Católica*** in Las Vegas from 1875 until 1918 when the press was moved to El Paso. ***La Revista Católica*** became the voice of Catholic fidelity combating the influence of Protestantism in the *Sangre de Cristos*. Benjamin Read, a Catholic intellectual, said ***La Revista Católica*** turned back the tide of Protestant propaganda by reinvoking the Catholic and Hispanic heritage of New Mexico and pointing out the errors of Protestant doctrine (Walker, 1991). Though the Jesuit editors of ***La Revista*** evoked the ghost of the Catholic monarchy, their ultimate purposes were never contrary to immigrant loyalism to the United States. The greater empathy of the Jesuits for New Mexico's Hispanos was certainly related to the Italian, Irish, and German origins of most New Mexican Jesuits - peoples who always had more intimate connections with La Hispanidad

The Situation Since Statehood

Since Vatican II (1962-1965) another tidal wave of Protestantism has inundated northern New Mexico, especially Pentecostal and Baptist churches. Catholic resistance is now much weaker. The reforms of Vatican II have undermined the morale of the institutional church; moreover, sexual scandals have made many *Nuevo Mexicanos* lose or question their faith. The resignation of New Mexico's first Hispano *nativo* Archbishop, Robert Sánchez (1974-1993) was particularly devastating. Americanization has proceeded at a more intense pace by way of greater economic integration and media-driven socialization. The old Hispano culture of New Mexico is now in its last living generation (Melendez, 1997). At the end of the twentieth century the political norms of the old Catholic monarchy are all but forgotten; New Mexico's old hidalgo class, once so

active in territorial politics (one recalls the careers of Donacio Vigil, Governor Miguel Otero, and Colonel Francisco Chávez) is no more. Today even the Catholic religion of Nuevo Mexico seems to be waning; only the extended family remains - a last vestige of Rome and the Mediterranean origins of the Hispanic world. The rush of frantic modernity favors the autonomous individual who can adopt to new markets, skills, and technologies. Will these developments eventually erode the bonds of family?

New Mexico became a state in 1912 during the first stages of the Mexican Revolution and two years before the first World War. Many politicians viewed the attainment of statehood as a positive finally recognizing the region's political and economic integration and acceptability to the United States. Statehood was indicated the passing of Hispano political power and the ascendancy of the dominant Anglo ruling class - vestigial recognition of New Mexico's special language status not withstanding. Anglos formed economic networks that dominated all of the state's resources, including most of the Hispano land grants. English speaking majorities were more prevalent in the larger cities. Meanwhile, new economic patterns marginalized Hispano elites whose old pastoral, agrarian, and commercial bases declined; this in turn allowed the bonds of patronage and clientage to wane, undermining Hispano political influence.

The depression (1929-1939) hit Hispano villages particularly hard. The agrarian and ranching base of Nuevo Mexicanos collapsed. The church proved incapable of meeting the challenge of economic decline, which allowed the state to become more ascendant in the lives of impoverished Hispanos (Forrest, 1989). In effect, the state replaced the church in providing social welfare, education, jobs, and protection - in effect, hope. The intense secularization of Hispanic societies, that began in Mexico during the

Bourbon reforms (1760-1810), reached completion in mid-twentieth century New Mexico through the agency of the American federal government (from the New Deal of FDR to the Great Society of LBJ - 1934-1968). Mora's wheat fields became untenable, and its mills closed; while Las Vegas lost its entrepot status when the wool export trade collapsed. As viable economic activity failed beleaguered populations migrated to Albuquerque, Denver, and Los Angeles in search of work; others lived on public assistance or public sector jobs that were distributed by means of a political spoils system. A brain drain ensued as the young and talented left, seeking their fortunes elsewhere. The church's role was marginal except for providing spiritual solace.

The Second Vatican Council initiated a series of liberal reforms that broke the pattern of unquestioning obedience or habitual religious performance (Martin, 1990). The mass was changed to the vernacular; the laity were included in readings, a more liberal social gospel was promoted, religious vocations collapsed leading to more laification and a growing shortage of clergy and religious teachers (Dussel, 1983). The financial base of local church declined leading to school and institutional closures which in turn exacerbated secularization. Mora's and Las Vegas' Catholic schools closed in 1967 and 1970 respectively. Meanwhile non-attendance or conversion to Protestantism underscored the fall of Catholic membership. Even the Penitentes lost their oppostional *elan*, when Archbishop William Byrn lifted their excommunication 1947 and they became a devotional sodality. Catholic folkarts continued but often as a museological backdrop for tourism. Liberation theology and the activism of civil rights spread as more Hispanic priests were ordained, culminating in the consecration of Archbishop Robert Sanchez (Dussel, 1983). Much of this new social commitment was like window-dressing in light of overall

institutional decline. Moreover, sex scandals, church payoffs, and yet another non-Hispanic Archbishop had brought New Mexico's church to low ebb. Ironically, Mora had only received its first native Hispanic priest in 1949, Father Albert Chávez. Though the Cassidy brothers had been priests from Mora since the 1930's.

If there is any hope for the Hispanic Catholic church in New Mexico and the Greater Southwest it will have to come from the millions of Mexican immigrants who have moved northward into the United States since the Mexican Revolution (Bailey, 1974). Many of them were Cristeros who fled the persecution of the church in revolutionary Mexico. Places like San Antonio, Texas they have constructed a viable middle-class Hispanic Catholic culture based on schools, colleges, civil rights, and political activism. Unfortunately, New Mexican Hispanos feel alienated from their *Mexicano* cousins because of divergent historical experiences since 1848. Perhaps this Cuatro-Centennial celebration of Oñate's founding of the *Reino de San Francisco de Nuevo Mexico* (1598-1998) will reinvoke the ancient bonds of the *norteño* peoples who settled the lands north of *Anahuac*, which the *Mexicas* called *Aztlán*.

Conclusion

For over a thousand years Catholicism has been the symbol of Hispanic cultural nationalism. The militant faith of the Reconquista was transported to the New World in the sixteenth century. In New Spain Catholic Christianity became the basis of a new civilization that was a synthesis of Iberian and Meso-American culture. The Spanish ruling class of Mexico eventually extended its colonial hegemony to include the lands of the Gran Chichimeca – El Norte. Mines, cattle ranches, missions, forts, and settlements were established over three centuries (1546-1846). The Church was an active agent in

these imperial ventures. Tragically, before the institutional basis of Hispanic life was solidified in the lands north of the Rio Grande and in Alta California, the region fell under the rule of the United States. Anglo-American domination of the Southwest has eroded the fledgling Catholic culture of a market-oriented, individualistic, and democratic society. The Mexicano people of El Norte continue their struggle to maintain the rich Catholic traditions of New Spain.

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